

# THE WORLD RECORD

INTERNATIONAL VOICES FROM  
SOUTHBANK CENTRE'S  
POETRY PARNASSUS

EDITED BY  
NEIL ASTLEY & ANNA SELBY

SOUTHBANK  
CENTRE



BLOODAXE BOOKS

Copyright of poems and translations rests with authors, translators and other rights holders as cited in the acknowledgements on pages 286-356, which constitute an extension of this copyright page.

ISBN: 978 1 85224 938 0

First published 2012 by  
Bloodaxe Books Ltd,  
Highgreen,  
Tarset,  
Northumberland NE48 1RP  
*in association with*  
Southbank Centre,  
Belvedere Road,  
London SE1 8XX.

[www.bloodaxebooks.com](http://www.bloodaxebooks.com)

For further information about Bloodaxe titles  
please visit our website or write to  
the above address for a catalogue.



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

#### LEGAL NOTICE

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the copyright holders listed on pages 286-356. Bloodaxe Books Ltd only controls publication rights to poems from its own publications and does *not* control rights to most of the poems published in this anthology.

Cover design: Neil Astley & Pamela Robertson-Pearce.

Printed in Great Britain by  
Bell & Bain Limited, Glasgow, Scotland.

## CONTENTS

<i>Simon Armitage</i>	15	Introduction
<i>Anna Selby</i>	18	Preface
		AFGHANISTAN
<i>Reza Mohammadi</i>	23	Rain
		ALBANIA
<i>Luljeta Lleshanaku</i>	24	No Time
		ALGERIA
<i>Soleiman Adel Guémar</i>	25	Eyes closed
		ANDORRA
<i>Ester Fenoll García</i>	27	Between your fingers...
		ANGOLA
<i>Ana Paula Tavares</i>	28	Bitter as Fruit
		ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
<i>Linisa George</i>	29	The Brown Girl in the Ring
		ARGENTINA
<i>Mirta Rosenberg</i>	31	Intimate Bestiary
		ARMENIA
<i>Razmik Davoyan</i>	32	Yessenin
		ARUBA
<i>Lasana M. Sekou</i>	34	We Continue
		AUSTRALIA
<i>John Kinsella</i>	36	The Ambassadors
		AUSTRIA
<i>Evelyn Schlag</i>	38	Lesson
		AZERBAIJAN
<i>Nigar Hasan-Zadeh</i>	39	'I knocked at someone's door...'
		THE BAHAMAS
<i>Christian Campbell</i>	40	Vertigo
		BAHRAIN
<i>Qassim Haddad</i>	41	Poets
		BANGLADESH
<i>Mir Mahfuz Ali</i>	42	My Salma
		BARBADOS
<i>Esther Phillips</i>	44	Near-Distance
		BELARUS
<i>Valzhyna Mort</i>	45	Belarus I
		BELGIUM
<i>Els Moors</i>	46	'I am the gardener with an alibi...'

		FIJI
<i>Sudesh Mishra</i>	106	Lorca
		FINLAND
<i>Pekko Kappi</i>	107	Märiäinen
		FRANCE
<i>Valérie Rouzeau</i>	109	Carpe Diem
		GABON
<i>Anonymous</i>	110	Sun
		THE GAMBIA
<i>Mariam Khan</i>	110	Men and Fame
		GEORGIA
<i>Maya Sarishvili</i>	111	Let my husband know
		GERMANY
<i>Jan Wagner</i>	112	a horse
		GHANA
<i>Nii Ayikmei Parkes</i>	113	Men Like Me
		GREAT BRITAIN
<i>Jo Shapcott</i>	114	Phrase Book
		GREECE
<i>Katerina Iliopoulou</i>	116	Tainaron
		GRENADA
<i>Maureen Roberts</i>	117	A Farewell Song
		GUAM
<i>Craig Santos Perez</i>	120	from preterrain
		GUATEMALA
<i>Carmen Matute</i>	121	The Fig's Proposal
		GUINEA
<i>Koumamanthio Zeinab Diallo</i>	122	Hymn to the brave peasant women of Africa
		GUINEA-BISSAU
<i>Vasco Cabral</i>	123	Last Adieus of a Forest-Fighter
		GUYANA
<i>John Agard</i>	124	Half-caste
		HAITI
<i>Évelyn Trouillot</i>	125	Please
		HONDURAS
<i>Mayra Oyuela</i>	126	Mistress of the house
		HONG KONG
<i>Jennifer Wong</i>	127	Glimpse
		HUNGARY
<i>Ágnes Lehóczky</i>	128	Nárcisz's telephone call in leapmouth
		ICELAND
<i>Gerdur Kristný</i>	129	Patriotic Poem

		INDIA	
<i>Tishani Doshi</i>	130	The Adulterous Citizen	
		INDONESIA	
<i>Laksmi Pamuntjak</i>	131	A Traveller's Tale	
		IRAN	
<i>Mini Khalvati</i>	133	Don't Ask Me, Love, for that First Love	
		IRAQ	
<i>Saadi Youssef</i>	134	Occupation 1943	
		IRELAND	
<i>Seamus Heaney</i>	135	The Underground	
		ITALY	
<i>Anat Zecharya</i>	136	A Woman of Valour	
		ISRAEL	
<i>Elisa Baigini</i>	137	from The Guest	
		JAMAICA	
<i>Kei Miller</i>	140	Your dance is like a cure	
		JAPAN	
<i>Ryoko Sekiguchi</i>	141	from Adagio ma non troppo	
		JORDAN	
<i>Anjad Nasser</i>	143	The Phases of the Moon in London	
		KAZAKHSTAN	
<i>Akerke Mussabekova</i>	144	Remember me	
		KENYA	
<i>Shailja Patel</i>	145	Eater of Death	
		KIRIBATI	
<i>Teresia Teaiwa</i>	150	Pacific Tsunami Found Poems	
		NORTH KOREA	
<i>Jang Jin Seong</i>	152	I Sell My Daughter for 100 Won	
		SOUTH KOREA	
<i>Kim Hyesoon</i>	153	Red Scissors Woman	
		KUWAIT	
<i>Saadia Mufarreh</i>	154	Distance	
		KYRGYZSTAN	
<i>Roza Mukasheva</i>	155	Nomad in the sunset	
		LAOS	
<i>Bryan Thao Worra</i>	156	No Regrets	
		LATVIA	
<i>Kārlis Vērdiņš</i>	157	Come to Me	
		LEBANON	
<i>Vénus Khoury-Gata</i>	158	Widow	
		LESOTHO	
<i>Rethabile Masilo</i>	159	The San's Promise	

		LIBERIA	
<i>Patricia Jabbeh Wesley</i>	160	The Women in My Family	
		LIBYA	
<i>Khaled Mattawa</i>	161	Borrowed Tongue	
		LIECHTENSTEIN	
<i>Elisabeth Kaufmann-Büchel</i>	162	Free as a Bird	
		LITHUANIA	
<i>Donatas Petrošius</i>	163	Ghost Dogs; Way of the Samurai	
		LUXEMBOURG	
<i>Anise Koltz</i>	164	Prologue	
		MACEDONIA	
<i>Nikola Madzirov</i>	165	Shadows Pass Us By	
		MADAGASCAR	
<i>Modeste Hugues</i>	166	Lavitra (Far Away)	
		MALAWI	
<i>Jack Mapanje</i>	166	Scrubbing the Furious Walls of Mikuyu	
		MALAYSIA	
<i>Sharanya Manivannan</i>	168	Dreaming of Burying My Grandmother Who Has No Grave	
		MALDIVES	
<i>Farah Didi</i>	169	winds of change	
		MALI	
<i>Oxmo Puccino</i>	170	'This is a song...'	
		MALTA	
<i>Immanuel Mifsud</i>	171	from A Handful of Leaves from Mallorca	
		MARSHALL ISLANDS	
<i>Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner</i>	172	history project	
		MAURITANIA	
<i>Mbarka Mint al-Barra'</i>	175	Message from a Martyr	
		MAURITIUS	
<i>Saradha Soobrayen</i>	176	My Conqueror	
		MEXICO	
<i>Rocio Cerón</i>	178	from America	
		MICRONESIA	
<i>Emelilhter Kihleng</i>	179	This morning at Joy	
		MOLDOVA	
<i>Vasile Gârnet</i>	180	Bookmark (I)	
		MONACO	
<i>Georges Franzi</i>	180	Many People Say...	
		MONGOLIA	
<i>Hadda Sendoo</i>	181	It Is Not True I Have No Hometown	
		MONTENEGRO	
<i>Aleksandar Bečanonić</i>	182	Pessoa: On Four Addresses	

		MOROCCO	
<i>Hassan El Ouazzani</i>	183	What If I Unsettled the Homeland?	
		MOZAMBIQUE	
<i>Ana Mafalda Leite</i>	187	Music Box	
		MYANMAR (BURMA)	
<i>Zeyar Lynn</i>	188	Slide Show	
		NAMIBIA	
<i>Mvula ya Nangolo</i>	190	From Exile	
		NAURU	
<i>Makerita Va'ai</i>	191	Rains of Nauru	
		NEPAL	
<i>Yuyutsu R.D. Sharma</i>	192	London Bombings	
		NETHERLANDS	
<i>Arjen Duinker</i>	194	from The Sublime Song of a Maybe	
		NEW ZEALAND	
<i>Bill Manhire</i>	195	Entering America	
		NICARAGUA	
<i>Gioconda Belli</i>	196	Brief Lessons in Eroticism I	
		NIGER	
<i>Adamou Idé</i>	198	I'm Scared	
		NIGERIA	
<i>Wole Soyinka</i>	199	Her Joy is Wild	
		NORWAY	
<i>Endre Ruset</i>	200	Plum tree	
		OMAN	
<i>Zahir Al-Ghafri</i>	201	A Room at the End of the World	
		PAKISTAN	
<i>Imtiaz Dharker</i>	202	Honour killing	
		PALAU	
<i>Anonymous</i>	203	The Bungle-man	
		PALESTINE	
<i>Rafeef Ziadah</i>	204	We Teach Life, Sir	
		PANAMA	
<i>Lucy Cristina Chau</i>	206	The Night	
		PAPUA NEW GUINEA	
<i>Steven Winduo</i>	207	Lomo'ha I am, in Spirits' Voice I Call	
		PARAGUAY	
<i>Lia Colombino</i>	208	from The Side	
		PERU	
<i>Victoria Guerrero Peirano</i>	209	The Cyclist	
		PHILIPPINES	
<i>Marjorie Evasco</i>	211	Despedida	
		POLAND	
<i>Jacek Dehnel</i>	212	The Death of Oscar Wilde	

		PORTUGAL	
<i>Rosa Alice Branco</i>	213	No Complaint Book	
		PUERTO RICO	
<i>Vanessa Dross</i>	214	The Absent Warrior	
		QATAR	
<i>Soad Al Kumari</i>	215	The Flood	
		ROMANIA	
<i>Doina Ioanid</i>	217	The Yellow Dog	
		RUSSIA	
<i>Ilya Kaminsky</i>	217	Author's Prayer	
		RWANDA	
<i>Edouard Bamporiki</i>	218	from A Cock Crows in Rwanda	
		SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	
<i>Ishaq Imruh Bakari</i>	221	Haiti is once again...	
		SAINT LUCIA	
<i>Derek Walcott</i>	224	As John to Patmos	
		ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	
<i>Philip Nanton</i>	225	Douglas' Dinky Death	
		SAMOA	
<i>Tusiata Avia</i>	226	Return to Paradise	
		AMERICAN SAMOA	
<i>Sia Figiel</i>	227	The Daffodils from a Native's Perspective	
		SAN MARINO	
<i>Milena Erçolani</i>	229	A Woman Is a Woman	
		SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE	
<i>Conceição Lima</i>	230	Cataclysm and Songs	
		SAUDI ARABIA	
<i>Ashjan Al Hendi</i>	231	In Search of the Other	
		SENEGAL	
<i>Didier Awadi</i>	232	In My Dream	
		SERBIA	
<i>Ana Ristović</i>	234	Circling Zero	
		SEYCHELLES	
<i>Antoine Abel</i>	236	Your Country	
		SIERRA LEONE	
<i>Syl Cheney-Coker</i>	236	On the 50th Anniversary of Amnesty International	
		SINGAPORE	
<i>Alvin Pang</i>	238	When the barbarians arrive	
		SLOVAKIA	
<i>Katarina Kuchelová</i>	239	from Little Big City	
		SLOVENIA	
<i>Taja Kramberger</i>	242	Every dead one has a name	



		SOLOMON ISLANDS
<i>Jully Makini</i>	244	Praying Parents
		SOMALIA
<i>Abdullahi Botaan Hassan</i>	245	Central London
		SOUTH AFRICA
<i>Katharine Kilalea</i>	247	You were a bird
		SPAIN
<i>Eli Tolaretxipi</i>	248	from Still Life with Loops
		SRI LANKA
<i>Minoli Salgado</i>	249	Patriot Games
		SUDAN
<i>Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi</i>	250	Nothing
		SURINAME
<i>Jit Narain</i>	251	Working all day, dreaming at night
		SWAZILAND
<i>Msandi Kababa</i>	252	Nayibamba Bophezu Kwemkhono (Hard Working Women)
		SWEDEN
<i>Laura Wihlborg</i>	253	Google Search Results
		SWITZERLAND
<i>Valeria Melchiorretto</i>	254	The Suitcase
		SYRIA
<i>Rasha Omran</i>	255	Ophelia, As I Want To Be
		TAJIKISTAN
<i>Farzaneh Khojandi</i>	257	Behind the Mass of Green
		TANZANIA
<i>Haji Gora Haji</i>	258	Wonders
		THAILAND
<i>Chiranan Pitpreecha</i>	259	The defiance of a flower
		TIMOR-LESTE
<i>Xanana Gusmão</i>	260	Grandfather Crocodile
		TOGO
<i>Jénima Fiadjoe-Prince Agbodjan</i>	261	Thank You for Being a Woman
		TONGA
<i>Karla Mila</i>	262	Oceania
		TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
<i>Anthony Joseph</i>	264	Buddha
		TUNISIA
<i>Amina Saïd</i>	266	'Each day...'
		TURKEY
<i>Roni Margulies</i>	267	Roni Margulies
		TURKMENISTAN
<i>Ak Welsapar</i>	268	The Night Dropped the Stars from the Sky

## ETHIOPIA

### BEWKETU SEYOUM

*Translated from the Amharic by Chris Beckett*

#### Elegy

The fall of every leaf diminishes me,  
so when I hear a rustle  
I send my eyes out of the window  
to look at the trees in the yard.  
Alas! where there were woods,  
now I see flag-poles standing.  
Men have swept nature's nest away  
to build their cities.  
The melody of the nightingale  
has lost its immortality  
and I am sitting on a dead land,  
writing my elegy in the sand.

## FII

### SUDESH MISHRA

#### Lorca

When they take him out again in a scene  
That echoes the primal scene of his murder,  
The dream is the same. A path forks out  
Into an orchard. It's a moonless night.  
Olives are not screaming for mercy.  
Gypsies are not cursing their guitars.

No dog, out of the blue, licks his face as he kneels.  
A cicada attempts a note, yes, but insinuates nothing.  
If he shivers, it's because of the cold.  
His captors have never seen the picture,  
But possessing the gift of hindsight  
Know exactly what to do. They load their guns.  
They take aim. They demand lessons in poetry.

## **FINLAND**

### **PEKKO KAPPI**

*Translated from the Finnish by the author*

### **Mariainen**

What do I sing, of whom am I singing?  
I am singing about the Creator's death  
about the death of Mariainen

Deep grave was dug  
Deep grave, iron bottom  
to the depth of nine laps  
to the depth of ten arm lengths

There the Creator was buried  
Mariainen put to death  
sealed with tin nails  
sealed with iron nails

So the Creator is being prayed to  
Oh, merciful Creator  
Make the sun shine  
And God's moon shine